Play Poetry vol 28

A

LETTER

FROM

A Lady to her Husband Abroad.

(Price One Shilling.)

A Letter to Mr. Hartsoeker

LETTER

A LETTER

FROM A

LADY to her HUSBAND Abroad.

——— Sequar atris ignibus abſens,
Omnibus umbra locis adero. Dabis improbe pœnas.

VIRGIL. Æn. Lib. 4.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-Lane*; and ſold by A. DODD, at the *Peacock* without *Temple-Bar*; and E. NUTT, at the *Royal-Exchange*. M.DCC.XXIX.

A Letter
from a Lady in the Country
to her Husband
in Town.

LONDON:

Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the Oxford-Arms in Warwick-Lane; and sold by A. DODD, at the Peacock without Temple-Bar; and E. NOTT, at the Kings-Arms in St. Paul's Church-Yard. MDCCXXIX.

Price 6d.

A

LETTER

FROM

A LADY to her HUSBAND, &c.

TO thee, dear Youth, in Sacred Wedlock ty'd,
Diſown'd, forſook, a Widow and a Bride;
Not ſuffer'd to lament, and diſallow'd
That one ſad Privilege of Widowhood;
Let me diſcloſe my Love, and ſpeak my Fears,
And freely pour my long-forbidden Tears.
Anxious I tremble, leſt in diſtant Lands,
Leſt too obedient to your Sire's Commands,
Whilſt from your faithful Conſort torn, you rove,
This ill-meant Abſence ſhould efface your Love.

Say, have you ſtill preſerv'd your conſtant Heart,
From the *French* Flutt'ring and *Italian* Art?
Does ſtill this Face each foreign Fair out-ſhine?
Does no forbidden Beauty rival mine?
Does yet your Breaſt its wonted Flame retain?
And is your *Father* guilty yet in vain?
O! that propitious Heaven would fix my Life
In barb'rous Climes a Captive, but a Wife,
By thee acknowledg'd, willing I'd remain,
Priſoner of Love, in *Italy* or *Spain*;
Safe in thy Arms enjoy the ſmiling Days,
And oft tranſported, bleſs the happy Place;
Happy whate'er its Government might prove,
Happy the Slaves in State, if free in Love.
But curſt I mourn a Slave amidſt the Free,
Born in the boaſted Land of Liberty:
For me no Shield the Cobweb Laws appear,
I feel by proof that Tyranny is here.

THO'

THO' Holy Rites that join'd our plighted Hands,
Confirm'd our Loves with everlasting Bands,
Still would your *arbitrary Sire* divide
Our Hearts, and doom thee to another Bride.
What frantick Aims distract his giddy View?
Which Power Almighty would in vain pursue;
Can he the past recall? can he the done undo?
Let Factions join th' Oppression to disclose,
And all my Friends be fir'd, and all my Foes;
Each Lover speak, to aid a Lover's Sighs,
To save a Wife, let every Woman rise;
Nor pent within this narrow Isle alone,
Wide as the World my History be known:
Where-e'er the *British* Navy spreads her Sails,
Bear it, ye Tides; and whisper it, ye Gales;
Ah! who the dangerous Story dares reveal?
'Tis Death to veil, it is but Death to tell.
My Father trembling, keeps the Tale unknown,
Nor for his Daughter's Life will risque his own;

Lest

Leſt Villains Power ſhould plotted Treaſon feign,
Or baſely load him with a Felon's Chain:
Afreſh my Wounds bleed at a Father's Name,
Weeping I bluſh, and pity whilſt I blame.
Did he for this the drooping *Tyrant* ſave,
And raiſe to Health when dropping to the Grave?
Is this the kind Reward, to be purſu'd
To Chains, to Death, by Stateſmen's Gratitude?
Or forc'd to deep Deſpair his Child to give,
His Darling Child, a curſt Alternative.

THE Great, too fond of their deſpotic Will,
The grave Diſtinctions mock of Good and Ill,
By vileſt Guilt, their *Helliſh* Ends enſure,
Nor ſtart at any Crime but being Poor:
For conſcious Heaven, no Reverence they ſhow,
If ſafe from *Legal Witneſſes* below;
If Hope of Place can move, or Fear of Death;
If Gold or Threat'ning ſtop the Tell-Tale Breath.

But me no Frown ſhall frighten to reſign
The Heart, which ſpight of Intereſt ſhall be mine.
To barter Thee for Lucre I diſdain,
Or ſtoop to ſell, whom I would die to gain;
The Candid Free my Conduct will approve,
My Fault is Virtue, for my Fault is Love.

LET him who dares in State *Tyrannick* Sway,
Make the Poor tremble, and the Rich obey;
Let *Peace* or *War* ſubmit to his Command;
Let him at Pleaſure *tax* the weary Land:
Enact, repeal, eſtabliſh, or remove,
Take Lives or Freedom, every thing but Love.

IF Power by Breach of Marriage muſt be ſhewn,
Let him, to prove his Strength, diſſolve his own;
No mutual Loves their Hearts together bind,
Thoſe vertuous Fetters have been long disjoin'd.

If mere Ambition diſappointed ſore
His fainting Breaſt, with Pangs unfelt before;
With flatt'ring Tone ſupport me, or I fall,
And forc'd the haughty Tongue for help to call!
O! could he think what ſorer Pain attends
Deſpairing Lovers, and departed Friends;
So might our Love-ſick Anguiſh vaniſh ſoon,
Could but that *Heart* relent as well as ſwoon:
Fears the vain Man our Marriage ſhould diſgrace
The antient Arms of his illuſtrious Race?
His Pride forgets, my Family is known,
If not ſo rich, as Gentle as his own.
Did e'er my Stem, ſo ſlighted though it be,
Produce a ſingle Branch ſo black as He?
Did e'er---but poor Reprizals I forbear,
And for the loyal Dead, the Living ſpare;
Spare for thy ſake; yet, O! had gracious Heaven,
To Worth like thine, ſome other *Parent* given,

Bleſt

Bleſt hadſt thou lov'd like humble happy Swains,
Had purer Currents fill'd thy honeſt Veins ;
Had virtuous Blood in thoſe dear Channels run,
O! could Fate change it ;---but thou art his Son.
Tho' his by Nature's Bonds, by Right Divine
Unſhaken and Eternal, thou art mine ;
Milton, Rebellion's Advocate, in vain
Would ſet the Conſcience free from Wedlock's Chain,
By quick Divorce when Nuptial Diſcord ſprings,
An Enemy to Love, as well as Kings :
In vain a *Sweet-tongu'd Oracle* of Laws,
Diſgrac'd his Silver Pen in ſuch a Cauſe ;
Whilſt Pagan Precedents ſupport his Dreams,
And Saints adorn his Patriarchal Schemes ;
Saints, in whoſe Footſteps he diſdains to tread,
Except by taking Handmaids to his Bed.

IN vain a zealous Proteſtant purſues,
Unchriſtian Peer, the Privilege of *Jews*,
To diſengage his Son from Bondage ſtrives,
Or ſave him from a Wife by adding Wives;
The Orphan's Plunder, and the Widow's Foe
With more Succeſs could equal Juſtice ſhow.
When a weak Stranger ſaw with frighted Eye
Th' united Strength of Power and Policy,
By Bribes and Threats determin'd to forſwear
Her Rank, her Fame, her Husband, and her Heir.
But Vows like ours mock the Divider's Art,
Thee, dear Poſſeſſor of my changeleſs Heart,
No Power on Earth ſhall tempt me to diſown,
Nor the great *Woolpack*, nor the greater *Throne*:
No Power on Earth our Friendſhip ought to move,
Tho' merely founded on the Baſe of Love.

Love

Love fix'd like ours, with Horror ſtruck you hear
A *Fiend* incarnate whiſp'ring to your Ear ;
" A Second wed, nor give the former o'er,
" But while you drop the Conſort, keep the Whore."
Can this the Counſel of a Father be ?
How worthy Him ! and how unworthy Thee !
Say we were yet unwed, ſhould I ſubmit,
To lay my Peace, my Virtue at his Feet ?
Stoop to a Load of Infamy, content
With Harlot's Shame and Harlot's Settlement,
Embrace his loveleſs *Courtezans* for Hire,
O ! could I bear it, or couldſt thou deſire ?
But me, no Tongue ſhall *Proſtitute* declare,
I leave that Title to another Fair ;
Her whom your *Tyrant* Father would provide,
To join your perjur'd Hands, a ſeeming Bride.
Muſt then your Innocence and Bliſs be ſold,
To pleaſe his never-ſated Thirſt of Gold ?

Eliza boaſts of Wealth a ſhining Store,
But hates the blooming Youth that I adore;
In vain her Father threats the ſteady Maid:
Shall I, with generous Anger, thus ſhe ſaid,
Allur'd by *ill-got Grandeur*, idle Charms,
Receive my Country's *Enemy* to my Arms,
Draw on my Seed collective Curſes down,
And pour a Nation's Vengeance on my Son?
Nor think too raſh my fix'd Reſolve appears,
Th' Unexperience of my Seventeen Years;
No, 'twas my Parents ſhow'd me not to bow,
And ſuch as he was once, will I be now.
No Time ſhall alter my well-grounded Thought,
Or ſhake the Virtue that a Father taught,
E'er Vanity could yet his Reaſon blind,
Or ſoothing Flatt'ry had bewitch'd his Mind:
Forbid it Heaven, ſhall I my Hand beſtow,
To raiſe a barb'rous domineering Foe?

" Shall I for him my Virgin Fame reſign,
" And blot th' *Eſcutcheon* of my Father's Line;
" Yield up the Wealth my *Anceſtors* have won,
" To ſhine the glorious *Strumpet* of his Son ?"
Eliza ſpoke, and O ! that fix'd as Fate,
May ſtand confirm'd her Everlaſting Hate ;
May ſome brave Youth with Well-tim'd Love conſpire,
To ſave her from the Dotage of her Sire !
But ah ! ſhould there my Wiſhes fruitleſs prove,
As much alas ! I fear, for much I love ;
Where ſhall I hide this miſerable Head,
Single, not free, without a Husband wed ?
My raviſh'd Bliſs muſt I for ever mourn ?
Can Joy departed once have no Return ?
That ſtingleſs Joy, which Luſt can never taſte,
Too great to tell, too exquiſite to laſt:
Joy which the guilty Great can never try,
Which all your Father's Thouſands cannot buy.

IF wicked Power your fickle Faith conſtrain,
And all my Fence of Love and Law be vain:
Haſte not to Guilt, Oh! ſtay a little, ſtay,
Till mould'ring Grief deſtroys this wretched Clay;
Then take my happier Rival to your Bed,
From Solemn Vows, how vainly ſolemn, freed;
Yet even then no Nuptial Joy diſplay,
Let my ſad Mem'ry cloud the gloomy Day;
With Sighs half-ſtifl'd meet th' appointed Hour,
And bow reluctant to the Tyrant's Power.
But ſoon ſtern Death ſhall drag the Wretch away,
From ſhort-liv'd Dreams of Arbitrary Sway;
At Heaven's great Court of Judgment to appear,
Terribly juſt, immoveably ſevere:
That Court where our Records of Love are plac'd,
That laſt uncancel'd, and ſhall ever laſt.

No Venal Friends ſhall there ſupport his Cauſe,
Nor Fraud nor Faction break th' Eternal Laws:
See flagrant Crimes ſtripp'd of their thin Diſguiſe,
With genuine Horror blaſt his Guilty Eyes;
Spectres of Power, and Wealth, and Time miſus'd,
Himſelf th' Accuſer, and himſelf th' Accus'd;
And deep to plunge him in extreme Deſpair;
There too is ------ ſad Ghoſt, and I am there.

FINIS.